# The Theosophical FORUM

FEBRUARY 1903

## OUR ARTICLES:


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| MUSIC | 181 |
| AMONG THE BIRDS | 182 |
| THE BUDDHA'S LIFE | 188 |
| OMAR KHAYYAM THE SUFI | 192 |
| THE EARLY RACES | 196 |



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# OMAR KHAYYAM

**Sufi Interpretation of Omar Khayyam and Fitzgerald**

by

**C. H. A. BJERREGAARD,**

**Librarian of New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, Tilden Foundations.**

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THE THEOSOPHICAL

# FORUM

VOL. 8. FEBRUARY, 1903 No. 10

## MUSIC.

All the elements of our national life, power, ambition, patriotism, sympathy, spring from the Invisible; the life of nations is a gradual revelation of what was hid in the Invisible.

National force reveals itself in action; national feeling and aspiration reveal themselves in art; and every nation has its peculiar art, fitted to its special genius and revelation; as Greek sculpture, Italian painting, English poetry, German philosophy.

The genius of America inclines most to music, the most vivid and stirring of the arts, and through music will come the deepest revelation of American feeling and aspiration, the expression of that part of our life which is in the Invisible.

And the time is fast coming for us to see in music not a mere decorative embroidery of sweet or harrowing sounds, which appeal to our emotions alone, but a profoundly significant language of the soul, which above all stimulates our wills.

## AMONG THE BIRDS.

*Translated from the Russian of Maxim Gorki.*

The grove, where this curious story took place, was suddenly startled by the fact that one of the birds sang a song which was not only hopeful, but simply full of assurance. Until then the birds were so cowed down by the grey, gloomy weather that they sang songs that could be called songs only because they were sung. Depressed and hopeless notes were predominant in them. Yet the listeners, who at first said the songs were like the painful breathing of the dying, gradually came to discover various beauties in them. Though, of course, this was rather difficult.

The key note of the grove came from the crows, birds who are essentially misanthropical and moreover incapable of anything but loud cawing. Of yore, when times were different, nobody would have paid any attention to them, but now they were listened to and respected for their wisdom.

"Caw-caw! As far as our eyes can reach we see nothing but pain, sorrow, dust and decay. Caw! awful are the strokes of doom, and resignation is the only wisdom."

Caw-caw! What a dull song, but a potent one also, because it had the power to depress the whole grove. And all of a sudden that bold singer bursting into song!

The grove had heard many a song, yet it was startled, and listened with strained attention and much wonder. Even the nightingales who necessarily sing well, being the priesthood of pure art, listened with pleasure and said:

"The singer is not devoid of the divine spark."

And speaking so, in secret, they were extremely proud that they were so just.

"Do you hear this"? they inquired of each other and smiled.

And the singer sang:

"I hear the cawing of the crows who are frightened by the cold and the darkness. I also see the darkness, but what is it to me, if my mind is good and clear! Follow me, you who are brave! Let darkness disappear. A living soul cannot live in it. Let us light up our hearts with the fire of our minds, and let light reign everywhere!"

"Powerfully sung!" commented the nightingales. "It is green, it is conceited, it is not musical, but it certainly is powerful."

And the singer went on:

"He who honorably died in the battle, is he fallen, is he dead? No. He is dead who timorously left the battle shielding his own breast. Friends, he also is fallen, who fearing trouble, labor and the pain of wounds, discusses the battle, plunged in a philosophical mist."

"My! what original ideas," said the birds.

The song continued:

"Friends, let the fallen be silent; their eyes are eaten out by the fog of doubts. Honor and pride sleep in their hearts. Friends, let us shout to them: Away! do not poison the hearts of the young. Away! for here we have declared war against the gods for the right of priority."

The grove listened and felt something good and strong thrilling its heart. The birds felt they lived once more. But where was the singer? Let him receive the tribute of delight and gratitude. This must certainly be a gorgeous bird. In a great crowd, the birds moved on in search of the singer, guided by the inspiring sounds.

But when they arrived they saw nothing but a siskin, a most common little siskin, with grey feathers and a wax-like beak, who sat on the bough of a hazel bush and looked extremely upset by the honor paid to him. Small, unkempt and restless, he puzzled everybody and was liked by no one.

"Away! for here we have declared war against the gods for the right of priority."

These words shouted by an eagle, a hawk or even a faulkon would certainly sound grand and beautiful. But a siskin proclaiming war for priority against the gods—why, this is simply incongruous, it is unheard of and altogether ridiculous. Moreover, it is decidedly offensive to the rest of the birds. Why a siskin, and not a wren, a robin or a starling!

The birds were surprised, they felt slighted and thought: "What next?"

Amongst the birds was one young tree sparrow, who never lost his presence of mind even in the most trying circumstances.

He was the first to speak:

"Say! was it you who sang a little while ago?"

"It was I," answered the siskin, "yes, it was I who sang."

"Is this so? And can you prove it? I mean, we do not doubt your talent, but——"

The siskin shuddered, his feathers stood on end at the approach of inspiration and he sang:

"In the darkness of the night, we have called down on us, grey owls fly around; their eyes shine and glow in the dark; they laugh and they sob; they curse the coming of the dawn and rejoice at the approach of the night. But the eagles are weak and sickly; they hide in the holes of the valley, eating their hearts out with anger, devoid of honor or force, listening to the sounds of other people's merriment; their wings droop down dejectedly, their hearts are shamefully asleep. And these birds, though born for freedom, can hear the voice of inspiration and reason no more."

This some of the birds took personally and hissed the siskin, but the tree sparrow spoke again:

"That will do, we are satisfied. In a way you have aroused our higher consciousness. But do tell me, what is your authorisation, I mean: what is your object in singing?"

The siskin said nothing; he only stared at his audience, in wonder and perplexity.

"Don't you see how it is," went on the sparrow, "in the past we were deceived quite frequently, and it is our intention that our future progress shall be insured against error. Consequently we desire to know your points of departure and also your final goal."

The sparrow was so pleased with himself, that he burst into a song—somebody else's song, it is true, for he had no song of his own.

But the siskin was put on his mettle.

"My point of departure," he said, "is my firm belief in the high destiny of birds, they being the final, the most complete and the most ingenious outcome of nature's creative activity. We must ever be ready to fight, that we may justify ourselves in our own eyes, that we may say: *We* are the past, the present and the future, and not the blind force of the elements. The path we are to follow

is unknown to me, but I know that we must press forward. There stretches the land which will reward us for the labors of the way. There is to be found the eternal, the inexhaustible light. There we shall rejoice in the contemplation of our power, and the whole universe will become the arena of our activity, the greatness of which we are not even able to imagine at present. There our thoughts will solve all the problems, and our senses, reaching a miraculous development, will open to us a new world of unknown delights. There we shall live a life worthy of us. Respect and love each other and, advancing to victory like one invincible army, allow no doubts in your hearts, for you are the climax of creation. Glance at yourselves in the past, what were you then? The best beliefs that you were capable of then were not worth a particle of your present doubts. Having learned to doubt so completely, you have now to learn to believe in yourselves, for only the essentially great can doubt as you doubt."

"Forward! Forward!" cried all the birds, for they all felt so proud, so full of life and joy.

"Listen to me one moment. I demand the right of speech."

This was the voice of a wood-pecker perched on the top of an aspen tree. He screamed so loud that the right of speech was given to him immediately.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "allow me to introduce myself; I am a wood-pecker. I eat larvae and love truth. I serve truth unswervingly, which forces me to tell you, that you are shamefully deceived. The songs and words you have just listened to are a shameless lie, and this I shall proceed to prove to you, gentlemen, with facts in hand. Facts in hand, gentlemen! Will anybody ask Mr. Siskin where are the facts which would confirm what he says? He has none, yet he needs them more than I. Let us consider dispassionately what we are likely to find in the land where Mr. Siskin wants you to go. You all have occasionally been on the outskirts of the forest. You know that where it ends there directly begins a field, which is burned up by the sun in summer and covered with snow in winter. At the other end of the field is a village, in which there lives a man whose occupation it is to ensnare birds. This is the first station on the way to the land of which Mr. Siskin has told you so much. Supposing, that, accord-

ing to his wish, we rush forward. Though I permit myself to doubt the disinterestedness of his wish, as siskins, just like any other bird, do not turn up their noses at popularity, renown, glory, etc. Still supposing, that we pass safely the snares of the bird-catcher and pass the village by. All we would have gained would be to find ourselves in another field, at the end of which there will be another village. Then once more a field, then a village, then a field. And as the earth is round, we necessarily shall, sooner or later, strike the very grove in which at this moment I have the honor of addressing you. Then, is this the land, which according to Mr. Siskin's assertions, is to reward our labors? Is this the land? I know you, ladies and gentlemen, I know how very high you can fly, but—bitter as it is for me to say so, I also know that none among you did or can fly higher than himself. Mr. Siskin's attempt to subjugate you by confusing your minds with brilliant and high talk just demonstrates what a low opinion he has of you as of beings endowed with common sense. Gentlemen, this attempt deserves a severe punishment."

And his heart full of the consciousness of a well fulfilled social duty, the wise wood-pecker turned again to seek the larvae under the bark of the aspen tree.

The birds stared in silence at the siskin. He also kept silent, bitter tears dropping one after the other out of his eyes. What was he crying about, if it was not about his guilt before them? Oh, the miserable little grey liar!

Without a word of farewell, without a nod for the one, whom they so recently were ready to proclaim their leader, the birds hurried home.

The wood-pecker also flew away, accompanied by signs of respectful acknowledgement of his superior wisdom.

The day grew grey and meloncholy, as if the sky also was about to cry.

Utterly crushed and motionless, the siskin stayed on the bough of the hazel bush. For a while a blue-jay watched him with much curiosity, hiding in the aspen leaves, then she got tired of it, and with a mocking shriek, she flew away.

And this is the whole story. When you read it, you will certainly see, that the siskin had a noble heart, and also that he had

no faith; that the wood-pecker had much common sense, but that his mind was essentially vulgar; and that the bird audience was responsive only because of its insatiable curiosity, but that the hearts of the birds are dry and shallow, so shamefully shallow.

## THE BUDDHA'S LIFE.

We first heard of Buddhism, it may almost be said, through the works of Brian Houghton Hodgson, and his explorations in the libraries of Nepal. Before him, there was emptiness, void; total ignorance of a religion which has never had an equal for widespread sway, and which has subjugated races among the wildest and most ignorant of the world; not less than it has won a place among peoples for ages in possession of a high traditional culture. Yet, even after the researches of that patriarch among Indian students, Buddhism won almost no popular interest in Western lands; and all the labours of the now numerous band of Pali scholars, with their steady output of texts, translations, and commentaries, has done almost nothing to make Buddhism a subject of popular knowledge. It was reserved for Sir Edwin Arnold, and the *Light of Asia,* to gain a popular hearing for what is certainly one of the most noteworthy works of the human mind, and to draw the eyes of the Western world to one of the sublimest and most heroic figures of historic times. And it is impossible to say that Sir Edwin's success was not amply earned. It is true that his critics have ascribed to him rather a superficial and versatile talent than a true poetic gift; it is true that he has at times turned his ready pen to work which his admirers would rather have seen rejected; it is true that he has lent his skill to other faiths, as eloquently as to Buddhism; and, finally, it is true that he himself deliberately attempted to neutralise and undo the great success of his life, by writing, confessedly with a sectarian purpose, a later work, the *Light of the World.* But, in spite of all this, *The Light of Asia* remains the popular presentation of Buddha and Buddhism, as assuredly as it is the high-water mark of Sir Edwin Arnold's achievement in verse; and, with no intention of disparaging this brilliant and versatile writer, it must be said that the chief element of its success is faithfulness to the character and ideals of the Indian Prince, rather than to any special poetical inspiration or high verse-weaving skill, that this unquestionable success was due.

This real fidelity to the original thought and feeling, not less than to the original tradition of Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha, is brought home very forcibly if we compare the *Light of Asia* with

a very remarkable work recently added to the literature of Buddhism, by an editor whose wonderful refinement of knowledge seems to have checked, rather than aided, his work as a productive scholar. Professor Cowell, in publishing a text of Ashva Ghosha's *Buddha Charita,* and, later, a translation of the same, has done a work the true importance of which he gives us no clue to in his very modest and very scholarly introduction. For, in the *Buddha Charita,* we have, to begin with, an almost contemporary work with which we may compare the *Light of Asia,* and ascertain how far this, the only presentation of Buddhism which the world in general has found itself able to accept, is a faithful and true rendering, in harmony with the incidents, colour, and spirit of the original. In making a series of comparisons, I shall assume that your readers are familiar with *The Light of Asia,* and shall, therefore, quote only from the old Sanskrit life, which is probably to be ascribed to a period some two milleniums ago,—that is, about 500 years after the events it records.

Sir Edwin Arnold has very well and faithfully preserved the rich, Oriental colour of the original,—which is, if Professor Cowell be correct, the first model of that school whose greatest light was Kalidasa, and whose enamelled luxuriance the world has never seen equalled. But it seems to me, at the same time, that the original is deeper, more philosophical, and more elevated in tone than the modern adaptation. Take, for instance, the passage where are described the thoughts that led up to Buddha's resolution to leave his kingdom in search of wisdom:—

"He beheld the fruitful earth being ploughed, while the path of the share divided the soil like the waves of the sea; and he saw also how, when the grassy sods were cut and thrown aside by the plough, numberless lives of minute creatures were scattered and slain. Viewing this, he greatly grieved, as for the death of his own kin.

"Watching the men who were ploughing also, and seeing them parched and stained by the sun and the wind and the dust, and seeing the draught oxen galled by the burden of the yoke, he, noblest of men, was full of pity. Thereupon, dismounted from his horse's back, he wandered slowly away, penetrated by grief, thinking on the birth and the passing away of the world. 'Pitiful is it,

indeed,' he said, and sadness oppressed him. Desiring therefore loneliness, he sent back his friends and sat down in a solitary place, at the root of a rose-apple tree heavily laden with luscious leaves; and he rested there on the earth, carpeted with grass and flowers, and enamelled as with precious stones."

This passage shows at once the rich colour of Ashva Ghosha's poem, and its deep, philosophic thought; for it would have been quite possible to make the motive of Siddhartha's renunciation spring from some scene of melodrama, of repulsion from some signal spectacle of sorrow or of wrong: a tragic indictment against fate, such as Shakespeare has embodied in a splendid sonnet. But, with great wisdom, Ashva Ghosha has found his motive in a scene of quiet rural life, dull and uninteresting; the ploughing of the lowly husbandmen whose lives go down into the night, hardly more noted than "the numberless lives of minute creatures scattered and slain" by the shares of their own ploughs. The true philosopher needs no tragic or melodramatic event to impress on him the mystery of life, and the narrow bonds of limitation that hem in the destiny of man. Like a true lover of Nature, he finds the spiritual quality everywhere, on the simplest tuft of grass, or sandheap, or broken stone, and does not need to seek it in waterfalls, and mountains and storms. The philosopher sees the contrast between spirit and circumstance as much in the stoop of a ploughman or the laboured tread of his oxen, as in the passion of Othello or the wild tragedy of King Lear.

Another passage records an incident that Sir Edwin Arnold has omitted altogether: Siddhartha's declaration of his intention to the King, his father:—

" 'O Sovereign of the people, grant me this request! I would set forth a pilgrim, seeking for liberation; for certain is the dissolution of mankind here below.' The King, hearing these words, shivered like a tree struck by an elephant. And clasping his son's hands like lotuses, he spoke to him, his voice choked with tears:—

'Put away from thee, beloved, this mind of thine, for the time is not ripe for thee to enter on the pilgrimage of the law. In youth, when the mind is unstable, it is a fault to enter on the path. For the heart of a young man is infirm in keeping vows, and his appetite is eager for the things of sense. It is fitter for me to give

my Kingdom up to thee, and seek the good law instead of thee. For it would be great lawlessness in thee to turn thy back on me. Therefore put thy vow aside, and return to thy household life. After thou hast lived the life of a man, thou wilt find truer delight in the forest life'.

Hearing this word of the King's, the Prince made answer, in a voice modulated and low:—

'If thou wilt become my surety in four things, O King, then will I not seek the forest, and renunciation: That this life of mine shall not wane to death; that sickness shall never steal upon my health; that old age shall not mar the glory of my youth; that misfortune shall not overtake my prosperity.'"

Here again we find the same profound note; it is not the special and striking tragedies of life, its melodramas and startling calamities, that have filled Siddhartha with a sense of its meanness, but rather the common way that all must tread, that all have trodden so long as to have accepted it as the inevitable. It is from this universal fate that the Rajput Prince set forth to seek for liberation.

# OMAR KHAYYAM THE SUFI.

*A review of Dr. H. A. Bjerregaard's interpretation of the Persian Poet.*

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, or the Fitzgerald version which has been inseparably associated with the Persian poet, has heretofore been considered a poem which in its boldest aspect teaches a hopeless pessimism, an Epicurean philosophy of seizing present pleasure because to-morrow we die, a materialism of the highest degree.

In Dr. Bjerregaard's interpretation the poet is shown in a new and entirely different light, and instead of a philosophy of materialism and pessimism we find concealed in the Sufi metaphors and symbols the Mystic's idea of the One God impersonal and immaterial, hidden behind the veil through which physically none may see; whose manifestations are our visible world.

Before refering at greater length to Dr. Bjerregaard's book, it is well to say a few words of the Sufis, to which sect Omar Khayyam is supposed by some to have belonged. The Sufis were a mystic and philosophical sect of the religion of Islam, usually of the superior and intellectual classes, having four principal degrees and practising—outwardly at any rate—the ritual laws of Mohamedanism. All their teachings were couched in the language of symbolism, and all Sufi poetry and parlance is to be taken allegorically and symbolically. Thus when the Sufi poet sings of love or wine, he does not mean beautiful women or the juice of the grape and intoxication, but rather the ecstatic condition of our faculties when they are merged or exaulted into those of the Deity.

The familiar versions of Omar Khayyam make him a free-thinker and an athiest and he is said to have been hated and dreaded by the Sufis, many of whose practices he ridiculed. He lived at a time when Persian literature had reached its greatest brilliancy and was on the verge of decadence and he was not considered orthodox by his own countrymen, even at a time when the greatest liberty of religious thought was tolerated. We know but little of Omar's life. All that can be said positively is that he was born in the latter half of our eleventh and died in the first quarter of our twelfth century. Tradition says of him that he was a man

of great learning and intellect, an astronomer, and a contemporary of the most brilliant of the Persian poets, and was one of the eight wise men employed by Malik Shah—the Sovereign of his time—to revise the calendar. Being a philosopher and a student, a man of but moderate wants and but little worldly ambition, he prefered the seclusion of the scientist to the wealth and honors which were repeatedly offered him by the Shah and which he always declined.

"Seldom," says Dr. Bjerregaard, "has a poet suffered from his friends and his foes as has Omar Khayyam. He has been regarded as a freethinker, a subverter of faith, an athiest and materialist; a Pantheist and a scoffer at mysticism; an orthodox Musselman; a true philosopher; a keen observer; a man of learning; a hypocrit and a blasphemer—nay more, an incarnate negation of positive religion and all moral belief; the Persian Abul-Ala, Voltaire and Heine in one. All this criticism is curious because it is so completely out of harmony with the facts of Omar's life. It is true that no complete authentic manuscript of Omar's is known and equally true that no comprehensive biography is known, but detailed information has come down to us from his contemporaries. From these notes enough can be gathered to show that Omar was a great man indeed, one who clearly and forcibly shows the four sides of a perfect character.

Omar's philosophy is that of the Sufi's. In that, too, he is consistant. The One is Truth, Truth is the reality of things, Truth burns to draw men to its self, Truth is the law of the universe."

Much has been said and written on Omar Khayyam and many different opinions are held as to what his quatrains really do mean. Dr. Bjerregaard has analysed and elaborated the various symbols and metaphors at great length and in a most painstaking manner, and shows us that the symbols are not to be taken in their material sense, but rather as the emblems which express the connection between man and nature. We are shown how, through the awakening of the higher self, man is roused from his spiritual apathy and indifference and the way to higher and better things is pointed out to him. The questions are raised as to the wisdom of creation, the origin of evil, the final outcome of life, etc., and the Sufi through his metaphors and symbols answers them. Scientific subjects are

discussed and explained and finally, having laid aside the things of the world and drunk deep of the spiritual wine of wisdom and understanding, he awaits the will of the Supreme and leaves this world to enter that of his Beloved.

Dr. Bjerregaard has placed opposite each verse of the Fitzgerald rendering the Sufi interpretation; many of the latter seem to have little or no connection with the Fitzgerald rendering and show that Dr. Bjerregaard has pharaphrased liberally to say the least, and in comparing many of the Fitzgerald verses with the Sufi interprettions it is difficult to understand how two translators or pharaphrasers of the same work could have arrived at such very different results. We regret that Dr. Bjeregaard has not quoted at greater length his authorities for changing the meaning of so many verses.

"The Sufi is not a re-incarnationist," says Dr. Bjerregaard, yet all through his book symbols and metaphors are explained in a manner which shows that either the Sufi was a re-incarnationist, or that Dr. Bjerregaard regards him as a preacher of this doctrine.

He says: "The Sufi listens kindly to the Magi who claim to have risen 'up from earth's center through the seventh gate'—and come back no wiser! He realises the strength of 'the will to live' that has carried them through so much suffering, so many births and deaths."

If the realisation of the strength of "the will to live" that has carried the Magi through "so many births and deaths" is not re-incarnation, it is something very like it.

Undoubtedly Dr. Bjerregaard's interpretation is of infinitely more value morally and ethically than the pessimistic and materialistic verses of Fitzgerald and in reading the Sufi explanation of the metaphors and symbols we are made to think of higher and better things and close the book with a feeling of spiritual uplifting. But after all, is this what Omar really meant? It is difficult to say. In reading the translation of a poet what we desire is the sentiments of the poet himself and not those of his translator. Perhaps Omar meant that his verses were to be taken in both senses He wrote at a time when there were many religious sects and opinions and when many varieties of creed and thought were tolerated. To escape heresy all that was necessary was to make

one's salaam to Mahommet and the Shah and having wished "Peace to Mahmud on his golden throne." Omar proceeds with his verses. The materialist can admire them for their beauty alone, the symbolist may delve for their deeper meaning. It would seem almost impossible for anybody but a Persian and a contemporary of Omar's to decide just how his verses are to be interpreted.

Dr. Bjerregaard's interpretation of Omar Khayyam will be received by the many readers of the Persian poet with varied emotions. Those who admire the beauty of his verses while decrying their sentiments will be pleased to learn that they may now be taken in a different and opposite sense and that concealed in the metaphors of love and wine is the weariness of the things of this world, the craving of the soul for something higher and better, and finally an answer to the question that has been asked since the world began. To the admirers of the Fitzgerald cult who have looked upon Omar as a preacher of materialism and pessimism it will be something of a shock to find their apostle torn away from his carousing and placed upon the pedestal of respectability.

All, who are interested in Eastern thought and literature, must be interested in Dr. Bjerregaard's exposition of the poem. Opposite each verse of the Fitzgerald rendering is given the Sufi interpretation, enabling the reader to compare, verse by verse, the mystic meanings of the Fitzgerald quatrains, and enabling the student to read with the understanding of the mystic. In printing, binding and paper Dr. Bjerregaard's book leaves little to be desired. Printed on hand-made paper in red and dark green, with Persian frontispiece and original decorative designs on each page, it will appeal to all who love a well made book.

# THE EARLY RACES

IN THE POPOL VUH.

(*Continued.*)

## IV.

"But their wisdom was not shown because of their envy, the evil wish of their hearts having gained the mastery over them, although no act on the part of Hunahpu and Shbalanqué provoked them.

"For they did nothing but hunt with the blow-pipe every day: they were not loved either by their grandmother nor by Hunbatz or by Hunchouen: they gave them nothing to eat, only when the meal was ended, when Hunbatz and Hunchouen had finished eating, they came.

"But they did not take offence, nor were they angry, suffering with contentment; for they knew their nature, and saw as clearly as day. So they brought birds, when they came each day; but Hunbatz and Hunchouen ate them without giving them anything, whether to Hunahpu or Shbalanqué.

"Hunbatz and Hunchouen did nothing but play the flute and sing. Now once Hunahpu and Shbalanqué came without bringing any birds, and when they came, the old woman flew into a passion.

"'Why do you bring no birds?' was said to Hunahpu and Shbalanqué—'This is the cause of it, our Grandmother; only our birds have caught in the thick branches of the tree,' they answered: 'we are not able to climb up the tree to take them, our Grandmother; but let our elder brothers climb up; let them come with us, and bring the birds down;' they added.

"'It is well, we shall go with you to-morrow at dawn;' said the elder brothers in answer. But the wisdom of Hunbatz and Hunchouen was dead within them concerning their downfall: 'We shall change their natures and their bellies, and let our word take effect because of the great torments which they have inflicted on us. They wished us to perish and to be done to death, and that misfortune should overtake us, their young brothers. They have degraded us in their thoughts like slaves; in like manner shall we humiliate them, and we shall do it as a sign.'

"Said they to each other, while they were going to the foot of

a tree called *Canté* (yellow wood), accompanied by their elder brothers; they advanced, busying themselves with shooting with their blow-guns; numberless were the birds that twittered at the summit of the tree, and their elder brothers marveled to see so many birds.

"There were the birds, but never a one of them came falling to the foot of the tree, and: 'not one of our birds fell yet: go, throw them down, you others,' they said to their brothers. 'It is well,' they replied.

"But when they had climbed up the tree, the tree grew, and its trunk thickened; and afterwards, when Hunbatz and Hunchouen wished to come down, they were not able to come down from the top of the tree.

"So they said from the summit of the tree: 'How has this happened to us, Oh our younger brothers? Miserable are we! This tree affrights those who look at it, oh ye our brothers,' they said, from the top of the tree.

"And Hunahpu and Shbalanqué answered: 'Take off your belts, tie them round your waists, and leave a long end hanging behind, in that way you will be able to come down easily,' added their two brothers.

"'It is well,' they replied, loosening the ends of their belts: but at the same instant they became tails, and they were changed into monkeys.

"Then they went away immediately through the tree-tops, among the great and little hills; they went away everywhere through the woods, grimacing, and balancing themselves on the branches of the trees. Thus were overcome Hunbatz and Hunchouen by Hunahpu and Shbalanqué; but it was only through their magic power that they did it.

"Then they came home. Returning, they said to their grandmother and their mother: 'Grandmother, what has happened to our brothers, that in an instant their faces have become like those of the beasts?' they said.

"'If it is you who have done these things to your brothers, you have ruined me, you have overwhelmed me with sadness. Do not deal thus with your elder brothers, oh my children'—the old woman replied to Hunahpu and Shbalanqué.

"Then they replied to their grandmother: 'you shall see our brothers' faces again; they shall come back: but only it shall thus be a trial for you, grandmother; be careful not to laugh. Now learn what has befallen them.'

"Immediately they began to play on the flute, and they played the air called Hunahpu-Qoy—Hunahpu's monkey.

"After that they sang, and played the flute and drum, taking their flutes and hand-drums; then making their grandmother sit down beside them, they played their instruments, to call forth their elder brothers by their sounds and by their songs, the air of which was called Hunahpu's monkey.

"Then Hunbatz and Hunchouen came, and began to dance, as they approached; but, as soon as the old woman saw their ugly faces, she laughed while looking at them, without being able to stop laughing; but the same moment they ran away, and she saw their faces no more.

" 'You see, grandmother; they have gone away to the woods. What have you done, grandmother? We can only make this trial four times, and only three times remain.

" 'We shall call them with the sound of the flute, and with singing, keep back your laughter, and let the trial begin again,' added Hunahpu and Shbalanqué.

"Forthwith they began to play the flute anew; and they came dancing back as far as the middle of the hall, giving their mother so much pleasure, and so well arousing her mirth, that she soon burst out into a fit of laughter: there was in truth something so grotesque in their monkey-faces, with the width of their paunches, the waggling of their tails, and their flat bellies, that the old woman had good reason to laugh, when they entered.

"Then they ran away back to the mountains. 'What are we going to do now, Grandmother? For the third time we shall begin the trial,' said Hunahpu and Shbalanqué.

"They played the flute once again, and they came back dancing once more; and for awhile their grandmother was able to keep from laughing. The monkeys climbed up the terrace of the house, showing their big, red eyes, and their long snouts, and the grimaces of every sort that they made to themselves.

"Then the old woman looked at them once more, and soon she

burst out laughing. But their faces were no more seen, on account of the old woman's laughter: 'This once more, grandmother, we shall call them forth from the wood, and this will be the fourth time,' said Hunahpu and Shbalanqué.

"They were called forth once again by the sound of the flute; but the fourth time they would not come, and fled away into the woods. Then they said to their grandmother: 'We have tried, grandmother, but they have not come, although we tried to call them. Do not grieve about it: we are here, your grandchildren, and we shall look on you as our mother, grandmother, since it comes that we remain, in place of our elder brothers, who were called and named Hunbatz and Hunchouen, as they were called,' said Hunahpu and Shbalanqué.

"Now Hunbatz and Hunchouen were invoked by the musicians and singers of the people of olden times, and formerly they were invoked likewise by the painters and sculptors. But they were changed into beasts and became monkeys, because they grew proud, and ill-treated their brothers.

"Thus their reason was destroyed: thus Hunbatz and Hunchouen were lost and destroyed, when they were changed into beasts. But before that they lived constantly in their houses, and as they were great musicians and singers, they accomplished great things, while they lived with their grandmother and their mother."

"Now Hunbatz and Hunchouen were great musicians, and singers: having grown up in the midst of great labors and great toils, which they had passed through, tormented in every way, they had become great sages: they had become equal as flute-players, singers, painters and sculptors; everything came forth perfect from their hands.

"They knew certainly what was their birth, and they were instructed likewise that they were the representatives of their fathers who had gone to Shibalba, where their fathers died; they were full of wisdom, were Hunbatz and Hunchouen, and in their wisdom they had known from the outset all that concerned the existence of their young brothers."

The art-sense reflected in the allusions to painting, music and sculpture takes us back direct to the marvelously sculptured monoliths of Copan, Palenqué and Quirigua. On some of the columns

of the latter, so strongly reminiscent of the obelisks of the Nile valley, are faces which have as high a plastic feeling as any archaic sculpture, that of ancient Hellas alone excepted. As to their music, —in which the two wicked elder brothers were so proficient,—I should like to say much; but it would be unjust to a theme of high importance and interest, to introduce it as merely a corollary to another subject.

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"The Theosophical Society in America by its delegates and members in Convention assembled, does hereby proclaim fraternal good will and kindly feeling toward all students of Theosophy and members of Theosophical Societies wherever and however situated. It further proclaims and avers its hearty sympathy and association with such persons and organizations in all theosophical matters except those of government and administration, and invites their correspondence and co-operation.

"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

"It joins hands with all religions and religious bodies whose efforts are directed to the purification of men's thoughts and the bettering of their ways, and it avows its harmony therewith. To all scientific societies and individual searchers after wisdom upon whatever plane and by whatever righteous means pursued, it is and will be grateful for such discovery and unfoldment of Truth as shall serve to announce and confirm a *scientific basis for ethics.*

"And lastly, it invites to its membership those who, seeking a higher life hereafter, would learn to know the *Path* to tread in this."

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